

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled).
2. (Currently Amended) An information sharing apparatus, which communicates with ~~at least one terminal corresponding to one of users~~ a plurality of terminals corresponding to a plurality of users respectively, comprising:
 - a first receiving unit configured to receive an authentication request including authentication information of one of the users;
 - an authentication unit configured to execute personal authentication by using the authentication information, and obtain, if the authentication information is authentic, two pass IDs whose values are the same;
 - a transfer unit configured to transfer one of the two pass IDs to one of the terminals which corresponds to the one of the users;
 - ~~an acquiring~~ a second receiving unit configured to acquire receive a pass ID and an information item including an image of a person;
 - a first generation unit configured to generate a temporary ID when the pass ID is equal to another of the two pass IDs;
 - an extracting unit configured to extract a contour of a person's face from the information item, to detect an image of the person's face as a personal information item;
 - a second generating unit configured to generate an anonymous information item by separating the detected personal information item from the information item, to

obtain (a) the anonymous information item which is the information item including the information item except the image of the person's face and (b) the personal information item corresponding to the image of the person's face;

a first storing unit configured to store a pair of the temporary ID and a personal ID which corresponds to the personal information item;

an encrypting unit configured to encrypt the personal information item;

a ~~first~~ second storing unit configured to store the anonymous information item to which the temporary ID and one of a plurality of levels which corresponds to the personal information item are added, and the encrypted personal information item, and the anonymous information item, ~~and one of a plurality of levels which corresponds to the personal information item,~~ the levels including (a) a first access level which is assigned to a first group of users of the users who can access only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item and (b) a second access level which is assigned to a second group of users of the users who can access both of the anonymous information item and the personal information item;

a third receiving unit configured to receive a request message for accessing the information item, the request message being transmitted from another of the terminal terminals;

a first transmitting unit configured to transmit only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item to the ~~terminal~~ another of the terminals in response to the request message, when an access

level predetermined to ~~the one~~ a user of the users which corresponds to the another of the terminals is equal to the first access level;

a synthesizing unit configured to synthesize the personal information item with the anonymous information item to obtain a regenerated information item including the image of the person's face; and

a second transmitting unit configured to transmit the regenerated information item in response to the request message, when the access level of the ~~one of the users~~ user is equal to the second access level.

3. - 7. (Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, ~~further comprising a second storing unit configured to store a pair of IDs, one of the pair corresponding to the personal information item and the other of the pair corresponding to the anonymous information item; wherein the synthesizing unit includes:~~

a ~~second~~ first acquiring unit configured to acquire ~~the one of the pair~~ based on the other of the pair a temporary ID added to the anonymous information item, to obtain the personal ID of the pair; and

a ~~third~~ second acquiring unit configured to acquire the personal information item which corresponds to the ~~[[one]]~~ personal ID of the pair and is to be synthesized with the anonymous information, from the ~~first~~ second storing unit.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the second generating unit ~~generate~~ generates the anonymous information item by

overwriting into an area corresponding to the personal information item with arbitrary symbols.

10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) A method for sharing acquired information items with a plurality of terminals corresponding to a plurality of users respectively, comprising:

receiving an authentication request including authentication information of one of the plurality of users;

executing personal authentication by using the authentication information, and obtain, if the authentication information is authentic, two pass IDs whose values are the same;

transferring one of the two pass IDs to one of the terminals which corresponds to the one of the plurality of user;

acquiring receiving a path ID and an information item including an image of a person;

generating a temporary ID when the pass ID is equal to another of the two pass IDs;

extracting a contour of a person's face from the information item, to detect an image of the person's face as a personal information item;

generating an anonymous information item by separating the detected personal information item from the information item, to obtain (a) the anonymous information item which is the information item including the information item except the image of the

person's face and (b) the personal information item corresponding to the image of the person's face;

storing, in a first memory, a pair of the temporary ID and a personal ID which corresponds to the personal information item;

encrypting the personal information item;

storing, in a ~~first~~ second memory, the anonymous information item to which the temporary ID and one of a plurality of levels which corresponds to the personal information item are added, and the encrypted personal information item, the
~~anonymous information item, and one of a plurality of levels which corresponds to the personal information item,~~ the levels including (a) a first access level which is assigned to a first group of users of the users who can access only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item and (b) a second access level which is assigned to a second group of users of the users who can access both of the anonymous information item and the personal information item;

receiving a request message for accessing the information item, the request message being transmitted from ~~one~~ another of the ~~plurality of~~ terminals;

transmitting only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item to the ~~one~~ another of the ~~plurality of~~ terminals in response to the request message, when an access level ~~of one~~
predetermined to a user of the ~~plurality of~~ users who corresponds to the ~~one~~ another of the ~~plurality of~~ terminals is equal to the first access level;

synthesizing the personal information item with the anonymous information item, to obtain a regenerated information item including the image of the person's face; and

transmitting the regenerated information item in response to the request message, when the access level of the ~~one of the users~~ user is equal to the second access level.

12. - 15. (Canceled).

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11, ~~further comprising:~~
~~storing, in a second memory, a pair of IDs, one of the pair corresponding to the~~
~~personal information item and the other of the pair corresponding to the anonymous~~
~~information item;~~ wherein the synthesizing includes:

acquiring the ~~one of the pair~~, based on the ~~other of the pair~~ temporary ID added
to the anonymous information item, to obtain the personal ID of the pair; and

acquiring the personal information item which corresponds to the ~~one~~ personal ID
of the pair and is to be synthesized with the anonymous information, from the ~~first~~
second memory.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the
generating the anonymous information generates the anonymous information item by
overwriting into an area corresponding to the personal information item with arbitrary
symbols.